

Indicators of Marriage and Fertility: 2000-2003

Introduction

An analysis of data from the American Community Survey conducted by the US Census Bureau for 2000-2003 on marriage and fertility nationally shows that there are marked geographic patterns. The findings revealed that states with populations that had a higher estimated median age at first marriage tend to have a higher proportion of unmarried-couple households and lower proportion of married-couple households.

Geographical differences also exist in the proportion of women with infants living below the poverty level correlated with low levels of labor force participation, high levels of births among teenagers, and high proportions of births among unmarried mothers. This monthly brief provides information on median age at first marriage, coupled households, and some characteristics of women with a birth in the last year, nationally and for the District of Columbia residents.

Median Age at First Marriage

In the District of Columbia (the District) the estimated median age at first marriage (MAFM) for 2000-2003 was 29.9 for women

and 30.1 for men (*Table 1*). The MAFM for women and men in the District was higher than the national average, which was estimated at 25.1 and 26.7 for women and men respectively. In general, MAFM for women and men in the Northeast, which includes the District, are higher than the national average. States in the Midwest, West and South have lower MAFM than the national average.

Coupled Households

Married-couple households in the District averaged 21.7 % between 2000 and 2003 (*Table 1*). Unmarried partner households averaged 5.5% over the same period. However, the District was far below the national average of 50.6% married couple households but more in line with the national average of 5% unmarried partner households. States in the West and Midwest had a higher percentage of married couples compared with the national average.

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**Table 1: Estimated Median Age at First Marriage
2000-2003**

Area	Men	Women
District of Columbia	30.1	29.9
United States	26.7	25.1

**Percent of Coupled Households
2000-2003**

Area	Married Couple Households	Unmarried Partner Households
District of Columbia	21.7%	5.5%
United States	50.6%	5.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2002-2003, Census Supplemental Survey 2000-2001



Women with a Birth in the Last Year

An estimated 53.4% of women who gave birth in the last year in the District from 2000-2003 were **unmarried** (Table 2). The national average was 29%. Most states in the South had a higher percentage of mothers with a birth in the last year who were unmarried, compared with the national average. Most states in the West, Midwest and Northeast had lower percentages of mothers with a birth in the last year who were unmarried compared with the national average.

In the District, around 6.8% of mothers with a birth in the last year were **teenagers** for 2000-2003 (Table 2). Nationally, around 8% of mothers with a birth in the last year were teenagers. Most states in the South had a higher percentage of mothers with a birth in the last year who were teenagers compared to the national average, while most states in the Northeast had a lower percentage.

Among mothers with a birth in the last year in the District, 36.3% were **below the poverty level** for 2000-2003 (Table 3). Of all married women who gave birth in the last year in the District, 24% were below the poverty level. Among unmarried mothers with a birth in the last year in the District, 54.4% were below the poverty level. Nationally, among mothers with a birth in the last year 23% were below the poverty level for 2000-2003; 12% of all married mothers who gave birth in the last year were below the poverty level; and half of all unmarried mothers with a birth in the last year were below the poverty level. A higher percentage

of married mothers with a birth in the last year who live in states in the West and South were below the poverty level when compared to the national average. The Midwest and Northeast states had a lower percentage of married mothers with a birth in the last year who were below the poverty level compared with the national average.

Fifty-six percent of all District mothers with a birth in the last year were **in the labor force** for 2000-2003; 58.9% of all married mothers with a birth in the last year were in the labor force; and 53.2% of all unmarried mothers with a birth in the last year were in the labor force (Table 3). For 2000-2003 in the United States, 56% of all mothers with a birth in the last year were in the labor force for 2000-2003; 54% of all married

mothers with a birth in the last year were in the labor force; and 60% of all unmarried mothers with a birth in the last year were in the labor force.

In the District, 7.4% of mothers with a birth in the last year spoke English “not well” or “not at all” for 2000-2003 (Table 4). Nineteen percent of mothers with a birth in the last year were non-citizens. For the United States 8% of mothers with a birth in the last year **spoke English “not well” or “not at all”** for 2000-2003 and 15% of mothers with a birth in the last year were **non-citizens**. States in the West, Texas and Illinois had a higher percentage of mothers who spoke English “not well” or “not at all”, and were non-citizens compared with the national average.

Table 2 Percent of Women with a Birth in the Last Year Who Are Unmarried 2000-2003	
Area	Percent
District of Columbia	53.4%
United States	29.1%

Table 2 Percent of Women with a Birth in the Last Year Who Are Teenagers 2000-2003	
Area	Percent
District of Columbia	6.8%
United States	7.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2002-2003, Census Supplemental Survey 2000-2001

Table 3 Percent of Women with a Birth in the Last Year Who Are Below the Poverty Level 2000-2003			
Area	All Women	Married Women	Unmarried Women
District of Columbia	36.3%	24.0%	54.4%
United States	23.2%	12.2%	50.0%

Table 3 Percent of Women with a Birth in the Last Year Who Are in the Labor Force 2000-2003			
Area	All Women	Married Women	Unmarried Women
District of Columbia	55.9%	58.9%	53.3%
United States	56.1%	54.4%	60.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2002-2003, Census Supplemental Survey 2000-2001

Table 4 Percent of Women with a Birth in the Last Year by Language and Citizenship Indicators 2000-2003		
Area	Percent Who Speak English 'Not well' or 'Not at all'	Percent Who are Non-citizens
District of Columbia	7.4%	19.2%
United States	8.2%	14.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2002-2003, Census Supplemental Survey 2000-2001

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